

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 291152Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0175
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24919

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TH
SUBJ: PROSPECTS FOR APPROVAL OF THAI CONSTITUTION

REF: BANGKOK 24332

1. DURING COURTESY CALL BY AMBASSADOR ON NLA SPEAKER, RETIRED ACM HARIN HONGSAKUN, AUG 28 HARIN REVIEWED SITUATION REGARDING DRAFT CONSTITUTION NOW BEFORE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
2. EVIDENTLY REFLECTING THE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK TO RECENT CHANGES IN DRAFT CONSTITUTION BY CONSTITUTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CSC) (REFTEL), HARIN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT CONSTITUTION MIGHT TURN OUT MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN THAT NOW BEING CONSIDERED. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, IT WAS IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME TO BALANCE INTERESTS OF BOTH PROMOTING THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND PRESERVING POLITICAL
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STABILITY. HE FELT THAT DIVISION OF A UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE INTO HALF ELECTED AND HALF APPOINTED MEMBERS, AS THE CSC HAS ADVOCATED, MIGHT BE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND TO POLITICAL PARTIES IF THE TRANSITION PERIOD TO A FULLY-ELECTED ASSEMBLY WERE LIMITED TO TWO INSTEAD OF FOUR YEARS, AS PROVIDED IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION PUBLISHED JUNE 23, AND IF PROVISION WERE

MADE FOR PROGRESSIVE ELECTION OF APPOINTED MEMBERS AFTER THE FIRST YEAR. HE SAID HE THOUGHT ARMED FORCES WOULD ACCEPT SUCH AN ACCELERATED TRANSITION TO A FULLY-ELECTED ASSEMBLY.

3. SPEAKING OF PROSPECTS FOR ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION, HARIN SAID THAT HE IS AIMING AT COMPLETION OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS BY END OF FIRST WEEK IN NOVEMBER. (IN LATER COMMENT TO PRESS HARIN SAID HE WAS AIMING FOR COMPLETION OF CONSTITUTION ON NOVEMBER 8, ANNIVERSARY OF PROMULGATION OF THAILAND'S FIRST CONSTITUTION IN 1932.) HE SAID, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY AMBASSADOR, THAT THERE IS NO RPT NO QUESTION THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD. AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF A STABLE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WOULD BE GREAT BOON TO THAI POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC GOALS.

4. COMMENT: IN COMMENTING ON SPEEDING UP THE TRANSITION TO A WHOLLY-ELECTED ASSEMBLY, HARIN MADE CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT RPT NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN WORK OF CONSTITUTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE BUT THAT HE FREQUENTLY DISCUSSES WORK OF NLA WITH INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS WHO DROP INTO HIS OFFICE. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE PROS AND CONS OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND OF AMENDMENTS MADE BY CSC ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO RIGOROUS SCRUTINY AND DISCUSSION BY NLA. AFTER CSC COMPLETES ITS REVIEW OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION, CONFIDENTIAL

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DRAFT WILL GO THROUGH SECOND AND THIRD READINGS, PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF NLA CONSIDERATION OF IT. THERE APPEARS TO BE AMPLE TIME FOR FURTHER CHANGES AND SIGNIFICANT INTEREST IN NLA IN MOVING TOWARDS MORE DEMOCRATIC FINAL VERSION. HARIN IS CAREFULLY PUSHING IN THAT DIRECTION. ABRAMOWITZ

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